



Division of Developmental Disabilities Advisory for Prevention of Heat- Related Illness

In an effort to promote consistent communication with community based provider agencies regarding practices to promote the prevention of heat-related illness, the Division of Developmental Disabilities is providing the following information.

- Be aware of heat advisories or warnings in your area- Information may be obtained from your local radio, television, newspaper or at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>. Knowing this information can assist with planning outdoor activities during the summer months.
- Ensure that consumer homes and vehicles have appropriate cooling systems. Temperatures can rise quickly in vehicles during summer months.
- Ensure that staff has information regarding local cooling centers if needed. The 211 website for MO. Cooling Centers is <http://www.211missouri.org>
- Ensure that staff is knowledgeable regarding when to seek emergency medical care regarding heat- related illness.
- Ensure that staff is knowledgeable regarding what to observe for regarding heat- related illness. It is important to communicate with the consumer' s practitioner to identify specific warning signs as some consumers may not have the ability to sweat and/or may have different reporting parameters regarding their body temperature due to existing medical conditions.

The following Warning Signs of Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion are taken from <http://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/hyperthermia/index.php>

Warning Signs of Heat Stroke Vary But May Include:

- Extremely high body temperature (above 103° F orally)
- No sweating
- Tingling sensations
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea

Warning Signs of Heat Exhaustion Include:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness, clammy skin
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness and weakness
- Dizziness or fainting
- Fast weak pulse

- Confusion
- Convulsions

- Nausea or vomiting
- Chills

The American Red Cross also has information regarding Heat Wave Safety: <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/heat-wave>

- Ensure that any staff providing support to the consumer is knowledgeable regarding any currently prescribed consumer medication(s) that may increase consumer risk for heat-related illness. Medications include those that may inhibit perspiration, increase body fluid loss or increase the potential for heat stroke such as: anticholinergics, diuretics, antihistamines, beta-blockers, benzodiazepines, neuroleptics and tricyclic antidepressants. **Please check with the prescribing practitioner or pharmacist as they can assist you with identifying medications that may fall into these categories. It is helpful to note identified side effects prominently for staff review on the consumer' s Medication Administration Record.**
- Ensure that any staff providing support to the consumer is knowledgeable regarding any existing medical conditions or treatments which may adversely affect an individual' s response to the heat/sun. **The consumer' s practitioner can discuss with you if these conditions or medical treatments apply and provide specific information regarding what to observe for and when to seek medical treatment.**
- Ensure that consumers receive adequate hydration. If a consumer is on a restricted fluid intake program, review this with their primary practitioner for the possibility of providing extra fluids during hot/humid weather.
- Ensure that any staff providing support to the consumer is knowledgeable regarding any currently prescribed medications that may increase the skin' s sensitivity to the sun such as: sulfonamides, tetracyclines, non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, thiazide diuretics and phenothiazines. Please check with the prescribing practitioner or pharmacist as they can assist you with identifying medications that may fall into these categories. It is helpful to note identified side effects prominently for staff review on the consumer' s Medication Administration Record.

- Ensure that all necessary supports regarding the prevention of health-related illness are identified in the consumer' s current personal plan.
- Ensure that sunscreen is applied when outdoors unless medically contraindicated.
- Ensure that staff discusses with the consumer' s practitioner what type of sunscreen will best meet the consumer' s skin protection needs and are knowledgeable regarding product usage, including reapplication frequency.
- Ensure that any staff providing support to the consumer is knowledgeable regarding appropriate clothing supports when outdoors including hats, sunglasses etc...

Information leads to Knowledge. Knowledge leads to the practice of Prevention. The practice of Prevention promotes Health.